

The Ku-Klux reign of terror. Synopsis of a portion of the testimony taken by the Congressional investigating committee. No. 5. [n. p. 1872].

Found among the papers of Zachariah Chandler.

THE KU-KLUX REIGN OF TERROR.

Synopsis of a Portion of the Testimony Taken by the Congressional Investigating Committee.

No. V.

The following are the principal cases of outrage developed in the examination of witnesses from the State of South Carolina before the Committee in session in Washington in July last:

SOUTH CAROLINA.

In Laurens county ten or twelve persons were killed in a riot the day after the State election, in October, 1870, the United States troops having just left, and the citizens being unprotected. In Newberry county, May, 1871, a Mr. Young, colored, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, was fired upon and wounded; also, his wife and child. White as well as colored officials were "waited upon." In Fairfield and York counties various white officials were waited upon, and warned to resign. At Union county Court-house, December, 1870, nine men were taken out and hung by four or five hundred disguised men. In Fairfield disguised men made their appearance twice, in the night, and "notified certain officers that if they did not resign within a given time they would come and attend to them." In Spartansburg county, November, 1870, Samuel T. Poinier was ordered away, and his life threatened. In October, 1870, two whites and three negroes were whipped most brutally by disguised men. John Genobles, a white man aged sixty-eight, was whipped by men wearing disguises. A witness testifies that in this county some fifty or sixty cases of violence occurred, which was inflicted by persons in disguise upon either negroes or white men.

In York county, October, 1870, Charles D. O'Keefe was brutally assaulted. He had held positions as deputy collector, assistant marshal for taking the census, president and secretary of the Union League; slept in the woods for twenty-three or twenty-four nights, being in dread of the Ku-Klux. He had organized a Union League of one hundred and ninety-six members, and was brutally assaulted as he was about taking the train to leave. Witness knew of a man who was taken out of the house, tied and whipped, receiving seventy lashes of the buggy traces.

In Sumpter county, October, 1870, John J. Neason was visited at night by men in disguise, and called out. He asked them what they intended to do? The answer was: "To whip you." He said, "For

what? Am I guilty of any crime!" The reply was: "No; but you keep a country store, and you allow Republicans to hold their meetings and their barbecues here, and you have been a manager of elections for the last five or six years; and we intend to stop it We give you ten days to close up your business, and then we will give you five days more in which to leave the county." Witness had built a school-house on his place for the benefit of the colored children; they would not allow it to remain on the place, and burned it down. They stated his building the school-house was one thing they had against him. He was visited a second time in March, 1870, by at least twenty-five or thirty disguised men, all armed with double-barreled shot-guns, who took off his coat to whip him, but he begged off. In the same neighborhood, David Andrews, aged sixty-five or seventy, an ex-Union soldier, and father of six children, was doing well in business, but the Ku-Klux "closed him up."

At Manning, in Sumpter county, they drove out Captain Bigger and Mr. Coleman; Bigger was in charge of the Freedman's Bureau after the close of the war. Both were first taken out and tied to trees. In the same county, October, 1870, the store of David J. Robertson, brother of Senator Robertson, was burned by the Ku-Klux. In Newberry county, a Mr. Leahey, Probate Judge, was notified that he must leave. A county commissioner was visited by the Ku-Klux, and ordered to leave. In September, 1870, a negro, the captain of a militia company, was cut with a knife in a rencontre with a Mr. Chappell.

In Spartanburg county, September 10, 1870, Jordan Blanton and daughter were whipped. Gabriel Ostell, colored man, whipped. Clement Bowden, colored man, whipped severely at night by men in disguise. Minerva Bowden, colored, also whipped. William Champion, white, justice of the peace, was whipped in Limestone township, sixteen miles from Spartansburg, October, 1870. Daniel Lipscomb, whipped severely; Robert Irving shot through the shoulder by men in disguise. Lipscomb and Irving were managers of elections. C. Harry Price, white, constable and deputy census-taker, was whipped by men in disguise; Hugh A. Glover, constable, was shot; Moses Eaves was whipped; Nathaniel Johnson was shot down and killed; the Ku-Klux shot into the house of Mr. McKinney, near Spartanburg; Dr. J. Winn Smith, in Spartanburg county, was shot; Wallace Fowler, colored, living near Glen Spring, and aged about 70, was shot in the head with a pistol; Mr. Lender was very severely whipped; Messrs. Surrott, Linder, and Bowden, with their families, came to town because they were not safe where they lived.

In York county, November, 1870, Mr. Roundtree, negro, was killed at night by men in disguise; Anderson Brown and another negro, ditto; Mr. Williams, negro, captain of a militia company, hung by disguised men; Messrs. White and Hambright were whipped.

In Clarendon county, John Plowden was taken out of his house by armed and disguised men who whipped him and left him tied in a swamp; J. W. McCloud was whipped; Mr. Rame was warned

to leave; afterwards his goods, etc., were burned; Leander A. Bigger, who was first attacked in December, 1870, was attacked a second time, "bucked," and warned to leave; his friend Parker was cruelly tied to a tree and left to starve. The Ku-Klux robbed both of their pocket-books and revolvers; Mr. Lemon, county commissioner, was assassinated two miles from Manning.

The following is a brief synopsis of a portion of the testimony taken in Washington by the Select Committee:

Judge Richard B. Carpenter, of South Carolina, late candidate for Governor of that State on the so-called Reform (Democratic) ticket, against Governor Scott, (Republican,) having been called by the Democratic members of the Congressional Committee on Ku-Klux Outrages, was sworn and examined, testifying that he had held the office of Register of Bankruptcy and Judge of the First Circuit; that, as the candidate of the "Reform" Convention for the Governorship, he had canvassed the State for that position; that he had canvassed every county of the State thoroughly, except the county of Horry, and had become thoroughly acquainted with the situation of the people of both colors. He said: "There have unquestionably been many cases of violence. I have no doubt of the existence, in eight or ten counties, of some secret organization;" but was not certain that it was not more widely disseminated than that. He thinks this secret organization, by which these outrages have been committed in his State, was in existence in York, Chester, Fairfield, Spartanburg, Union, Laurens, Abbeville, Newberry, Edgefield, and Clarendon counties. He admitted that it might have been in existence in other parts of the State, but did not think it had a much more extensive existence in the State; he did think, however, that at one time it threatened to extend over a large area. He believed it was a military organization, and showed itself in first warning its objects, its subjects, of some supposed offense, and directing them to leave the country, or to vacate their offices, as the case might be. If they did not do that, he thought they followed it up by personal violence in many instances. He thought that when they appeared for the purpose of carrying anything into execution it was the general and universal practice for them to go in disguise, it being his understanding they were bodies of armed men in disguise and operating in the night time. He said his idea of the class of men composing this organization was that "a great many of them were very respectable men in the neighborhood where they lived, and not confined to a low or desperate class of people." When informed that in this particular he disagreed with some witnesses from his State, he replied that his own impression was that "very good men were in that organization, and concurred and aided in these acts of violence." He stated that he did not think it altogether true that the men of substance and respectability of all parties always disapproved of it and spoke against it, and that he still thought, for a variety of reasons that he could not detail, that a great many respectable and well-meaning men were engaged in it. He admitted it as his conviction that respectable people, people of substance, not only approved of it, but actually participated in it.

He admitted that these organizations, these bands of disguised men, committed a great many acts of violence, such as whipping, beating, killing &c. He thought they were not confined to persons who held official positions, but yet it was frequently the case that they were directed against those. He said there was no doubt that many of them were directed against persons who held no official positions. He had no doubt that certain "bad men" have assumed the garb of this brotherhood to gratify private malice and cover private lawlessness; and he said he believes this because certain cases seemed so at variance with their ordinary plan of procedure that he could not otherwise account for it. He said wherever the organization had been you can see in the line of conduct they have pursued a great deal of regularity and method. [Our witness seems to regard the "regularity and method" of "the brotherhood" as such redeeming virtues that all their whippings, burnings, and even murders are not sufficient to place them in the category of "bad men."]

He heard of disturbances in the upper part of the State; there was intimidation there in 1868, and no doubt some violence. He said the political sentiments of the colored people of South Carolina are unquestionably Republican, an overwhelming majority; there are very few white voters in South Carolina who vote the Republican ticket; and an overwhelming majority of the whites are Democrats. He thought Gov. Scott knew that, in any armed conflict between the two races, the blacks would go down, and that the controlling and leading men of the Republican party, whether white or black, did not want an armed conflict. He said the great mass of votes he received were given by Democrats. He did not know of any case where any colored military company ever made an attack on any whites or anybody else. He did not know when the Ku-Klux outrages commenced in South Carolina, but knew that outrages were perpetrated in the upper counties in the election of 1868; he thought he heard of bands of disguised men going about then, but did not think that after the November election in 1868 there was any violence at all of that kind in the State. He did not hear of any until after the election of 1870. He was of the opinion that the local causes that led to this Kukluxing did not exist prior to 1868. He traced those disturbances to a very different source than the Ku-Klux. He thought they were then confined to "desperate men." He defended three or four of them, and said he had very good reason to know that the operations spoken of there were by those "bands of lawless men." He thought this organization (Ku-Klux) in South Carolina was of a later date, and of a different character. He said all the Ku-Klux outrages have been perpetrated upon Republicans as a general thing. He admitted that where Republicans had not the power, or where everything has been largely the other way, there has been no Ku-Kluxing. He never heard of an outrage where the colored vote is very small, nor of any charges against the organization in question. Witness tells of a man in Clarendon, whom the Ku-Klux, after tearing down his store and injuring his goods, waited upon and handled roughly, making him leave. He admitted it was an "error of judgment" for "good and well-meaning men" in disguises to continue this system of applying the lash to the negroes; he did not think it tends to harmonize anything, to do any good, or to remedy any evil. He said these

Ku-Klux organizations existed in the middle and the eastern portion of the State. He said there was no doubt at all that there was a general combined effort on the part of the whites by kind treatment and conciliation of the colored people during the election canvass of 1870 to induce them to vote the "reform" ticket; and admits that there was a sudden outbreak of Ku-Klux outrages, culminating in numerous acts of violence, almost immediately after the election, the "reform" ticket having been defeated. That is, when the Democracy of the State found it useless to try to coax the negroes to vote their ticket, they at once threw off the mask.